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Higher Education Tops Budget Priorities
Sen. Goschka's fight for new floor funding for higher education pays off

LANSING – Higher education received three significant victories today with the creation of new floor funding for higher education, the elimination of the higher education tier system and the continued promise of the $2,500 Michigan Merit Award Scholarships, Sen. Mike Goschka, R-Brant, said.

As the Chair of the Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Sen. Goschka worked hard to establish a new floor funding for higher education in Michigan. The new system, announced as a budget priority during a press conference held by Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema and Speaker of the House Rick Johnson yesterday, will eliminate the current tier funding system.

"The tier funding system is subjective and unfair to the majority of state universities," Goschka said. "I am pleased to know that my efforts to create a more equitable system of higher education funding has paid off for students across the state. The lower funded schools greatly benefit from this policy!"

The budget priorities announced yesterday also protect the Merit Award Scholarships at $2,500. The scholarships, which are received in two equal payments of $1,250 over two years, can be used to cover college tuition and related costs. Funding for the Merit Award will continue from the state's portion of the federal tobacco lawsuit settlement.

"The Merit Award should remain a beacon of hope for students who work hard in school," Goschka said. "The scholarship has already had a positive impact on the lives of 140,000 students and will continue to do so as future generations of high school students pursue their dreams of higher education."

The Higher Education budget for 2004 was approved today.

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